

39. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *SALACIA KHASIANA* IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

During a botanical exploration in the Tirap Forest Division of Arunachal Pradesh, we collected a specimen of a rare scandent shrub which was conspicuous on account of its orange, warty fruits about the size of a small guava. After a critical study at the Forest Research Institute Herbarium, Dehra Dun, the specimen was identified as *Salacia khasiana* (Hippocrateaceae). It was earlier collected by Shri Ram Sharma from Umteswar Forest in Khasi Hills, Meghalaya and described by C. S. Purka-

yastha (*Ind. For.* 64 : 277. 1938). The present report of its occurrence in Arunachal Pradesh is therefore, of phytogeographical interest.

*Specimen examined :*

3rd November 1976, Nakfun range, Tirap Forest Division (Arunachal Pradesh) K. M. Vaid & H. B. Naithani ser II No. 175.

*Habitat :* On the bank of a shaded nullah.

SYSTEMATIC BOTANY BRANCH,  
FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE,  
DEHRA DUN-248 006.  
September 25, 1980.

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40. REDISCOVERY OF *METEOROMYRTUS WYNAADENSIS* (BEDD.) GAMBLE (MYRTACEAE) MORE THAN A CENTURY AFTER ITS EARLIER COLLECTION

The genus *Meteoromyrtus* Gamble (Myrtaceae) is endemic to India (Willis 1973) and is known only from Wynad District, Kerala. It is represented by a single species *M. wynaadensis* (Bedd.) Gamble. After the type collection from Devalicottah, S. E. Wynad by Beddome no information about the species was forthcoming.

The status of this taxon was uncertain. Beddome (see below) treated it as *Eugenia wynaadensis* Bedd. Duthie (in Hook. f. *Fl. Br. India* 2 : 506. 1879) remarked that, 'It seems intermediate between *Pimenta* and *Eugenia* having the pendulous ovules of the former and the habit and inflorescence of the latter'. He also stated that 'This is probably as Col. Beddome suggests the type of new genus intermediate

between *Pimenta* and *Eugenia*. The material at my disposal are too incomplete for the preparation of a proper generic description. The above is compiled from Col. Beddome's description of the plant'. Therefore, Duthie (loc. cit.) included the taxon under doubtful and excluded species under *Eugenia*. Gamble (*Kew Bull.* 1918 : 241. 1918) erected a new genus *Meteoromyrtus* based on the material of Beddome and pointed out that since 'Both Beddome in his *Icones* and Duthie in the flora of British India have signalized this species as being probably the type of the genus, and so I have no hesitation in describing it as such in spite of the poor material, in order to bring the plant into its proper place in the Madras Flora'.

An intensive search for this little known species was made since 1977 in the Districts of Wynad and the adjoining Cannannore and a population of it was located at a place near Chandanathode in 1979. As the fruit of this species was not seen either by Beddome or Gamble, the plants were kept under observation for more than two years and no fruiting material could be obtained although the plants flower profusely. Biology of the species, therefore, needs closer investigation. Further, since this taxon shares intermediate characters between *Pimenta* and *Eugenia* a biosystematic study may be rewarding from the evolutionary point of view.

Henry *et al.* (1979) included it under rare and threatened flowering plants of South India and indicated that there is no specimen of the taxon in MH. But, on a close study of the unidentified species of *Eugenia*, a sheet of the taxon collected from Wynad with the remark *Eugenia* new sp. could be located. No other data was available on the sheet. In the old accession register of MH it is indicated that the specimen was collected by Beddome in 1868.

*Meteoromyrtus wynaadensis* (Bedd.) Gamble in Kew Bull. 1918 : 241. 1918 et Fl. Pres. Madras 1 : 343. 1957 (rep. ed.). *Eugenia*

BOTANICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,  
COIMBATORE-3.  
November 27, 1980.

*wynaadensis* Bedd. in Madras J. Sci. Ser. 3 (1) : 47. 1864 et Fl. Sylv. Part 16 : 115. 1872 et Ic. Pl. Ind. Or. t. 161, 1874 ; Duthie in Hook. f. Fl. Brit. India 2 : 506. 1879.

A small tree up to  $\pm$  5 m. Flowers white.

*Specimens examined.* Theerthundamalai, Chandanathode,  $\pm$  975 m, 24-2-1979 V. S. Ramachandran 61362, 20-12-1979 V. S. Ramachandran 65333, 20-3-1980 V. S. Ramachandran 66834. Wynad Beddome s.n. (Acc. No. 20969). All sheets are in MH.

Beddome (loc. cit.) gives the flowering time as April. But, in the present locality it flowers from December to April.

As the plants are restricted to a very small area in North Kerala they are likely to be lost because of increasing pressure on land for cultivation, etc. Therefore immediate steps for its conservation are necessary.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are thankful to Dr. R. Sundara Raghavan, Regional Botanist, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for confirming the identity of the species.

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